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ABSTRACT

The Perkins Act requires states to adopt systems of outcome-based standards and measures of performance for judging the success of local vocational programs and guiding program improvement. Criteria for the design of states' systems of performance measures and standards include the following: the measures should be defined clearly and precisely; outcomes should be easily measured; a manageable number of outcome measures should be included in the accountability system; standards must be justified in terms of success in either the workplace or further education; and the information generated by the accountability system must be routinely accessible. A school focused on outcomes requires fundamental changes in teaching and learning. Many objections have been voiced to outcome-based education, especially from persons considered as members of the "religious right." These objections center especially on the outcomes having to do with values, which objectors say are the province of the families and churches. The area of home economics is especially vulnerable to such criticism because it deals with family life. Educational reformers counter that U.S. public schools designed for the 19th century are incapable of solving the problems that face the country in the 21st century. They say that schools should be reformed to stress outcome-based education. They believe that the higher-order thinking skills and occupational skills fostered by outcome-based education are essential to students' survival in the future. (KC)

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AVA RESEARCH SESSION - OUTCOME ASSESSMENT
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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TWO PERSPECTIVES: PERKINS II ACCOUNTABILITY
OBE/EDUCATION REFORM MOVEMENT

To set the stage for today, I'm going to interrelate two perspectives:

1. The first perspective is a straightforward statement on Perkins accountability regulations

2 The second perspective places this discussion in the greater education reform movement, which focuses on performance or outcome-based education (with its ensuing controversy)

I believe my favorite quotation from H.L Mencken is applicable to the issue which you've chosen for your research presession --that of outcome assessments: "For every complicated problem, there is a solution that is short, simple, and wrong."

The GAO study of the 1984 Perkins Act criticized states for spreading funds too thinly noting that the average grant of $5,000 was too small to be effective. The 1990 amendments required programs receiving federal funds to meet these criteria:

- assure that programs are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective (specifies that funds are to be used at a limited number of sites or program areas - minimum grant - $15,000)
- provide equitable participation by special populations (by targeting the money to those who need federal help the most--flows by formula to schools with concentrations of handicapped (20% - IEP's) and disadvantaged (70% - Ch. 1) and 10% on total enrollment)
- integrate academic and vocational education (by a coherent sequence of courses) - strong focus on assessment of academics
- **require states to adopt systems of outcome-based standards and measures of performance for judging the success of local programs and guiding program improvement. This point represents the intersect of the 2 perspectives for this session.**

Historically in education we have been preoccupied with process. The Perkins Act--as well as the greater education reform literature--is moving us toward the focus on outcomes. (In a recent workshop on Perkins state and local accountability, the discussion centered on the tension between evaluating process and outcomes. A panelist observed that if you try to regulate outcomes and process, then you become responsible for the congruence between the two--an interesting challenge.)

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Performance standards and measures as required in Perkins II are outcome-based performance indicators that provide the foundation for an accountability system developed by each State. Under the Perkins Act, each State includes at a minimum:

- measures of learning and competency gains, including student progress in the achievement of basic and academic skills

- one or more measures of performance such as:
  - competency attainment
  - job or work skill attainment
  - retention in school/secondary school completion
  - placement (in school, job, military)

Each State receiving funds under the Perkins Act must develop and implement a statewide system of core standards and measures of performance. Each local recipient of Title II, Part C funds must evaluate its programs (secondary, postsecondary, adult) annually using the State-developed standards and measures.

What are states doing?

- **Types of measures developed by states -** All states have implemented or plan to implement a measure of academic gains, compared with only 11 states measuring occupational competency gains. At the postsecondary level, it's 46 for academic and 5 for occupational.

- **Number of states measuring performance of learning outcomes** Most states are measuring occupational attainment (38) and retention or completion (32).

- **Definitions of measures**

NCRVE is concerned that states have confused definitions of standards and measures. The rules define:

Measure - description of an outcome (specifies how an outcome will be measured)

Standards - the level against which performance on the measure will be evaluated (Note: U.S. Depts. of Education and Labor are developing industry skill standards In home economics occupations, CHRIE - Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education, is developing standards for the tourism, travel and hospitality industry)

Criteria for design of states' systems of performance measures and standards

1. The desired measures and standards should be defined clearly and precisely.

2. Outcomes should be easily and accurately measured while minimizing data burden and cost.

3. A manageable number of outcome measures should be included in the accountability system.

4. Standards must have validity and be justified in terms of success in either the workplace or further education and training; they must also be fair, avoiding bias by race, gender, or special need.

5. Data for each measure should be collected at appropriate intervals of time.

6. The information generated by the accountability system should be routinely accessible to students, teachers, administrators, parents, employers, board members, and others interested in educational policy and performance.

Examples of state core standards - Oklahoma - Outcome - occupational competence)

Measure: Occupational test that includes the following:
1. Written test
2. Performance test
3. Competency profiles (can be used in lieu of test if test is not available)

Standard: One hundred percent of those vocational students who have completed occupational training will be competent in at least one occupation. Competency will be reached when the student scores seventy percent on the written assessment and one hundred percent on the performance assessment.

Process: Tests will be distributed, scored, and analyzed by the ODVTE.

Few states specify separate core standards for consumer homemaking. Missouri and Ohio are two states which do. I believe West Virginia and North Carolina as well as Ohio are engaged in competency test development for consumer homemaking.

The development of state core performance measures and standards takes place in the larger context of educational reform--one which focuses on the outcomes of education. This is the second perspective in my overview.

State examples:

Pennsylvania - eliminated Carnegie units/much controversy over outcomes
Minnesota and Wisconsin- early states to recognize the need for exit outcomes - Minnesota said the Carnegie unit no longer provides enough information about what is learned and the expected quality of student work
Florida - Blueprint 2000 And California - early reformers
Kentucky Education Reform Act- Massive reform - includes outcomes

Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century - eliminates traditional diplomas, requiring students to earn a certificate of initial mastery by the end of 10th grade or age 16 before advancing to two more years of college prep or job training.
Virginia - world class education - Virginia common core of learning
Vermont - portfolio assessment
Kansas - QPA - quality performance accreditation - outcomes accreditation process which addresses school improvement & accountability at the building level
Washington - Article in a recent Education Week titled "Groups Fighting Outcomes Plan in Washington".
Alabama - Ditto Washington
West Virginia - Has placed "Policy 2000" for public comment - basic tenets are time as variable and better instruction the norm.

I am a member of the conceptual design team--5 of us in the Ohio Department of Education--to frame outcomes or state standards. The project has been intense for the past year. The most appropriate metaphor for that project is that of a rollercoaster--just as we seem to be on a roll, some new obstacle emerges--primarily political.

The contention of education reformers is that American public schools designed for the 19th century are incapable of solving the problems that will face us in the 21st century. Therefore, we should focus on different results (or outcomes). Fundamental changes in teaching and learning are needed.

A part of the "sloppiness of the debate" in which many of us are engaged is the lack of being precise about the distinction between outcomes and OBE> Outcomes are what students should know and be able to do as a result of their education. They are demonstrated in a real life context. - The Aurora CO school district developed these outcomes--collaborative workers, quality producers, self-directed learners, complex thinkers, community contributors. Other lists include responsible citizen, effective communicator, culturally aware.

Outcome Based Education specifies the educative processes that lead to the desired outcomes. The leaders in the OBE movement include Bill Spady whom many of you have probably heard. Spady posits 3 levels of an outcome-based system--traditional, transitional, and transformational. I belive this schema captures the essence.

Systemic Change - Three Zones of Educational Restructuring - requires a restructuring of schooling--in the traditional zone, outcomes are demonstrations of content knowledge and skills and grades are given for a short time period; in the transitional zone,outcome demonstrations are of higher-order competencies and task performances; culminating at the end of semester or the year. Transformational is labelled "system change." Outcomes are role performances in realilife contexts and are measured when students exit the system.

A system focused on outcomes requires fundamental changes in teaching and learning.

My file on the OBE critics is larger than my file on OBE. Much of the criticism began in Pennsylvania with the religious right. Peg Luksik created a video entitled "Who's

controlling the minds of our children?" which is being widely distributed. (The agenda is much greater than that of OBE--it may include in some instances an effort to gain control of local school boards to support view of the religious right.)

A teacher gave me a flyer being distributed on a street corner in a small town in Ohio which reads: "The Ohio State Board of Education has reformed the educational process for the 1993-94 school year. Students will now be required to demonstrate "politically correct" attitudes and behaviors (outcomes) in order to graduate. In other words, children must become fully indoctrinated in the State's value system to graduate. This would likely include the acceptance of homosexuality as a viable and healthy lifestyle."

Phyllis Schlafly lists the following objections to OBE:

1. No evidence it works - no long term evidence; research is cited in ECS article and some local school districts have data such as Aurora Colorado and Arlington Illinois - much documentation from the NDN projects which are nationwide but based in Johnson City NY.

2. No method of accountability (tosses Carnegie units out--will return to this argument later

3. Dumbed-down egalitarian scheme that stifles individual potential by holding the entire class to the level of learning attainable by every child - based on assumption that students progress lock step in grade levels--neither transitional or transformational OBE would support this

4. academic and factual subject matter is replaced by vague and subjective learning outcomes--requires students to meet psychological objectives related to self esteem and ethical judgment. Raises the fundamental question of who should decide what values, attitudes, and beliefs a child should be taught - differing views on purpose of education

5. Sets up a computer file on each child to track the child's efforts to master the learning outcomes--"electronic portfolios" - much misinformation

6. High costs for administration and retraining of teachers - costs are in inservice but that's an important investment - ECS article has stats

7. More state control at the expense of local control - important to clarify that while in many states, outcomes are being determined at the state level, more decision making is reverting to the local level--particularly regarding how to get there--curricula, methods, texts, materials etc.

Schlafly concludes: OBE is a process for government telling our children how to live, what to say, what to think, what to know, and what not to know.

If you analyze these objections, you'll note that many relate to assessment of "subjective" outcomes.

Kyle Peck at Penn State has written several documents in response to Pennsylvania's quote "unprecedented, well-organized opposition to outcome-based education." The criticism focuses on the nature of the outcomes and particularly those that encompass values. Emphasis on values, claim opponents of OBE will detract from the academic program, which is the real purpose of schools. The development of values should be left to the homes and churches.

Peck posits this model:

Knowledge - Things you know - information like the capitals of states, how to spell.

Knowledge is something you have or don't have. We measure knowledge by saying: "tell me." We can measure, record, and communicate to parents what students do and do not know.

Skills - What you can do with what you know--includes physical skills and cognitive skills--solving problems, working as a team member, doing fractions.

We measure skills by saying "show me"--whether it is demonstration of skills in a foods laboratory or the complex skill of writing. Skills may be measured as checks (yes or no) or on scales indicating level of proficiency.

Attributes - "Who you are" -defines what a person will do- capacities such as honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, respect for individuals.

Attributes are more difficult to measure. However, if many of us rummaged in our attics, we may find a grade for conduct or citizenship. Peck says we should develop definitions for each category we decide is important and continuously improve our ability to measure and report.

Values - beliefs and opinions you hold (not the same definition as that used in critical science literature which posits that values can be rationally examined and have cognitive content--that is Marjorie Brown suggests that we must subject values to tests of moral legitimacy.) Peck gives the following examples of values (preferences) - Rock and roll is; abortion is; woman's place is in the home.

Values, Peck says, are controversial and should not be measured as a requirement for graduation. Parents and churches get upset when their teachings are contradicted by the schools.

What does education look like when there's a focus on outcomes?

Handout - New American School - There is a convergence of the literature--powerful minds are giving the same message. The contention of reformers is that American public schools designed for the 19th century are incapable of solving the problems that face us in the 21st century--one characterized as the information age and global economy.

How many of you when you've taught lessons on writing objectives have admonished against using the term "understand" - vague - can't measure. Grant Wiggins in a scholarly article in PDK suggests that indeed "understanding" is the objective.

Traditional schooling may be viewed in this transparency - As we've worked toward reformation in Ohio, we posed this desirable schooling format Implications for assessment relate to the complexity of outcomes . The concerns parallel those of evaluating practical reasoning/practical problem solving in home economics which Janet Laster is going to address later today. In OBE or performance-based lingo, these tasks, problems, issues, decisions, choices, dilemmas, projects, and questions require authentic assessment.

The OBE assessment literature develops the concepts of rubrics--defined as statements of expectations for the assignment. Rubrics may be created by the teacher and/or students to serve as a guide for developing quality work/performances. In occupational programs, rubrics may be based on national skill standards or state standards developed by business and industry. In practical problem solving, it may be a score sheet for levels of problem solving ability.

Home Economics Examples - It's risky to describe the status of any OBE projects because they are subject to political whims and change daily. What I'm going to share is fairly recent, but please correct me if any of these factors has changed.

Virginia Common Core of Learning - Sharron Glasscock has headed the effort with much involvement of teacher educators, supervisors, and teachers to develop the Work and Family Studies program with a set of outcomes related to the Virginia Common Core. On this chart you will note many of the concepts of teaching and learning which I noted before in the general education reform literature. As an update, Governor Wilder and the State Board of Education in September disavowed this work which has been acclaimed by OBE educators as a model reform package.

Kentucky includes practical living in its outcome areas - where you would find home economics.

Pennsylvania - Rob Brown, state supervisor in Pennsylvania, has worked with a team of teacher educators and regional lead teachers to develop home economics outcomes for Pennsylvania. They, as I mentioned earlier, have had major controversy but the last draft I have indicates that home economics is identified as one of the learning outcome areas

Michigan - The State Model Core Curriculum is a set of student outcomes, not courses or programs. Life and personal management is identified along with language arts, math & science etc.

Oregon - Chris Southers & Colleen Mileham have developed a document which positions home economics in the Oregon education reform movement.

Home Economics Issues

Ohio controversy - At the October state board meeting a woman who identified herself as "concerned parent, taxpayer, citizen of the United States and working toward a masters in family therapy testified as follows: "Schools can never be families. As an example of the school usurping the role of parents, refer to the most recent "Work and Family Life" OCAP (Ohio's competencies). She cites such offensive competencies as -

- "apply problem-solving process to personal and family problems for well-being of self and others."
- relate to others in positive, caring ways
- form healthy, caring relationships with family members
- use criteria and standards to make ethical decisions.

Related to the last competency, one of our critics wrote: When religion and the Bible were litigated out of the public school classroom, I feel the public schools forfeited their right to talk about "ethics" in any but the most general terms. The government schools have no right to talk about "criteria" and "standards" at all.

She asks: Does the state plan to measure, assess, and remediate these competency goals until the student achieves the state standard? What will that standard be? According to OBE methodology, they will be required to do so. It's important to note that these competencies were developed with panels of citizens, community agencies, and business and industry across the state.

In September I went with Sharon Redick's Ohio State study tour to Kenya. The focus of the study tour was on perennial issues of families, but I reflected upon this headline in the Kenya daily paper: "Kamotho warns against religious fundamentalism in some schools." Education issues are also universal.

CHALLENGES TO HOME ECONOMICS

1. Empower teachers to articulate a position for home economics in the educational reform movement in their school district. Be sure they are aware of and prepared to be proactive to counter potential criticism, particularly from the religious right.

2. Develop assessment measures for complex outcomes in home economics education - must be grounded in theory - must help teachers to understand the theoretical constructs for practices in assessment - You have a critical role in this effort.

3. Communicate outcomes to policy makers (latest challenge is elimination of the consumer homemaking program in Al Gore's Reinventing Government)

My part on the program is no doubt the simplest--an overview describes the problem. I conclude with this quote:

We have not succeeded in answering all your problems. The answers we have found only serve to raise a whole set of new questions. In some ways we feel we are as confused as ever, but we believe we are confused on a higher level and about more important things.